

**COUNTY LEGISLATURE
JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI**

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LEGISLATOR, FOURTH DISTRICT

JACKSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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April 12, 2002

The Hon. Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 – 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20544

Dear Mr. Powell:

I'm writing you in support of the proposed merger between EchoStar Communications Corp. (Dish Network) and Hughes Electronics Corp. (DirecTV), which is pending before the DoJ and the FCC (FCC Docket # 01-348).

To me, the important issue is not the possibility that the new EchoStar might dominate the Direct Broadcast Satellite market. The scarier monopoly is in pay TV, where cable companies have some 80% of the market, and in broadband Internet access over cable. This is the monopoly that actually controls access to these 21st-century technologies; and this is the monopoly where real competition can be introduced by the EchoStar merger.

The merger will free up spectrum that the two companies currently use for duplicative programs, which will enable the merged EchoStar to greatly expand its services – thus helping to bridge the “Digital Divide” that keeps rural residents from enjoying the full benefits of today’s technologies. This merger will help to provide genuine competition in the television and Internet markets. I hope you will support it.

Yours truly,

Dan Tarwater